

## Message Text

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20

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 OMB-01 DRC-01 /095 W

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R 040420Z MAR 74

FM AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2030

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, AS

SUBJECT: LIBERAL PARTY'S STATE COUNCIL MEETING:

REJECTS ELECTORAL COOPERATION WITH AUSTRALIA

PARTY; DELAYS REVISION OF PARTY PLATFORM

1. SUMMARY: DEBATE ON RESOLUTION FAVORING LIBERAL PARTY COOPERATION WITH THE AUSTRALIA PARTY (AP) CAME TO THE EXPECTED END WITH RESOUNDING DEFEAT OF YOUNG LIBERAL MOVEMENT (YLM) PROPOSAL AT VICTORIA STATE LIBERAL PARTY COUNCIL MEETING MARCH 2. OUTCOME WAS NOT MATERIALLY AFFECTED BY YOUNG LIBERAL'S ARTICULATE BUT LESS-THAN-BEST LOGICAL PRESENTATION OF RESOLUTION, BECAUSE TOP PARTY GUNS WERE LEVELLED AGAINST YLM RESOLUTION. SURPRISES WERE (A) THE LACK OF FIRM TALK OR PLANS FOR AN EARLY GENERAL ELECTION, AND (B) STRONG LANGUAGE USED BY FEDERAL PARTY PRESIDENT SOUTHY IN RESPONDING TO CRITICISM OF FEDERAL LIBERAL PARTY EXECUTIVE FOR DELAYING PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED PLANS TO REVISE NATIONAL PARTY PLATFORM IN TIME FOR THE (PARTIAL) SENATE ELECTIONS EXPECTED IN MAY. END SUMMARY.

2. FEDERAL PARTY BIGWIGS (OPPOSITION LEADER SNEDDEN, DEPUTY LEADER LYNCH AS WELL AS SHADOW MINISTERS PEACOCK AND FRASER, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BUT NOT REPEAT NOT FORMER PM JOHN GORTON) WITH ALL OF STATE

PARTY PERSONAGES, GRACED THE WEEKEND MEETING ATTENDED BY 470 OUT OF SOME 782 ELIGIBLE MEMBERS OF STATE PARTY COUNCIL. SNEDDEN OPENED THE MEETING WITH RESOUNDING SPEECH ON THEME IN FUTURE ELECTION CAMPAIGNS "THE LABOR GOVERNMENT'S MISMANAGEMENT OF THE COUNTRY, ESPECIALLY ITS ECONOMIC MISMANAGEMENT" WITH DETAILS. SNEDDEN SOUGHT TO CALM DEBATE ON ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE AUSTRALIAN PARTY, BY STRESSING (A) LIBERAL PARTY

REPRESENTATION OF BROAD SPECTRUM OF ELECTORATE SOME OF WHOM VOTE AP AS A FORM OF PROTEST, (B) LIBERAL PARTY POLICIES GEARED TO UNITY AND RETURNING LIBERAL VOTERS TO THE FOLD, AND (C) NEED TO FOREGO DIVISIVE DEBATE ON YLM RESOLUTION.

3. SHADOW MINISTER FOR LABOR MALCOLM FRASER SPOKE FORCEFULLY OF THE SHARP FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE AP AND THE LIBERAL PARTY ON SUCH ITEMS AS DEFENSE AND FOREIGN INVESTMENT. AFTER CAREFUL ALLOCATION OF TIME FOR BOTH SIDES TO BE HEARD, RESOLUTION WAS DEFEATED BY AN ESTIMATED 400 TO 70.

4. COUNCIL PERMITTED HOUR-LONG DEBATE ON UNEXPECTED RESOLUTION MOVED BY YLM AND SCATTERING OF OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS, REQUESTING LIBERAL PARTY EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT TO COMPLETE BY MAY 1974 THE REVISION OF YEARS-OLD PARTY PLATFORM, AS PLANNED BY THE FEDERAL EXECUTIVE LAST OCTOBER. RESOLUTION WAS DEFEATED BY AN ESTIMATED 300 TO 170.

5. COMMENT: CONSERVATIVE CORE OF LIBERAL PARTY WAS DEFINITELY IN CONTROL OF COUNCIL MEETING AND GAVE FAIR HEARING TO THE YLM WING ON ALL MATTERS. STRONG CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS OF PARTY ARE STRONGLY OPPOSED TO ANY ACCOMMODATION WITH AP FOR VALID REASON THAT IT WOULD ALIENATE CORE OF CURRENT LIBERAL PARTY STRENGTH. CONSERVATIVE CORE OF PARTY ALSO ADAMANT ON KEEPING THE "ORIGINAL PARTY PLATFORM THAT HAS SUPPORTED THE PARTY IN PAST". SOME PARTY LEADERS, HOWEVER, HAVE QUALMS ABOUT THIS STAND AND WOULD AT LEAST LIKE TO GO THROUGH THE MOTIONS OF "MODERNIZING" THE LIBERAL PARTY PLATFORM. PHILIP LYNCH DID NOT TAKE SIDES IN HIS SPEECH ON SUBJECT DURING DEBATE. ESTABLISHED PARTY LEADERS ARE UNHAPPY WITH SNEDDEN BUT WILL GO ALONG WITH HIM AS THE BEST BET IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE, ALTHOUGH THEIR STRONG PREFERENCE IS YOUNG (MID-30'S) MALCOLM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FRASER. AMAZING PART OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC FUNCTIONS SUCH AS THIS COUNCIL MEETING IS LACK OF PLAN FOR AN UPCOMING GENERAL ELECTION. FLUKER

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## Message Attributes

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